

HOUSE CALL

KelseyCare Advantage

April 2017

MEDICARE FRAUD AND ABUSE AFFECTS ALL OF US

Health care costs rise for all of us each time an insidious act of Medicare fraud is committed. By eliminating fraud, we can cut costs for individuals, families, businesses and the federal government while improving the quality of service for those who need care. **You can help combat the problem!**

Fraud typically involves making false statements or representations of material facts to obtain some benefit or payment for which no entitlement would otherwise exist. Here are some examples:

- A healthcare provider bills Medicare for services you never received.
- A supplier bills Medicare for equipment you never got.
- Someone uses your Medicare card to get medical care, supplies, or equipment.
- A company uses false information to mislead you into joining a Medicare plan.

“Preventing fraud requires everyone’s cooperation—the federal government, state governments, health care providers, insurers, law

enforcement, and citizens like you and me,” says Margaret Drakeley, KelseyCare Advantage Compliance Director.

Here are some key tip in protecting your personal information:

- Don’t give your Medicare, Medicaid, or Social Security numbers to strangers.
- Remember that Medicare does not call or visit to sell you anything.
- Keep records of your doctor visits, tests, and procedures in a personal health journal or calendar.
- Read your claims bills and quarterly payment statements and confirm you received the care and drugs listed.
- Save your Medicare Summary Notices and Part D Explanation of Benefits.
- Learn to protect yourself against identity theft at <https://goo.gl/ox4cGD>.
- Read Medicare’s lists of Do’s and Don’ts to prevent fraud <https://goo.gl/hi7aDG>

Medicare abuse is another costly epidemic. “Abuse describes practices that, either directly or indirectly, result in unnecessary costs to the Medicare Program,” says Denise Jonathan, KelseyCare Advantage Pharmacy Director. “Abuse includes any practice that is not consistent with the goals of providing patients with services that are medically necessary, meet professionally recognized standards, and are fairly priced.”

Examples of Medicare abuse may include:

- Misusing codes on a claim,
- Charging excessively for services or supplies, and
- Billing for services that were not medically necessary.

If each of us catches discrepancies and brings it to the attention of Medicare, we can cut costs for everyone and put a stop to these illegal and unethical practices.

SPRING CLEANING AND FALL PREVENTION TIPS FOR SENIORS

Spring is in the air and your house needs a good cleaning! For seniors, a clean house may not only brighten spirits, but also helps to make their home a healthy, safe place to live. Spring cleaning can also be dangerous for seniors! Falls and other injuries happen during spring cleaning due to decreased mobility, balance issues, vision problems and other health issues.

Before you start your spring cleaning, make a plan. Contact friends and relatives to help with heavy lifting, projects that require climbing or removing safety hazards. Turn your spring cleaning

into a social event. The work will go faster and you get to visit with family and friends and make new memories. Happy spring cleaning!

TIPS TO AVOID FALLS

- Remove all clutter that may block inside and outside walkways. Less clutter may mean fewer falls.
- Remove or secure scatter rugs; use non-skid rugs in bathrooms and kitchen.
- Repair loose floorboards and carpeting.
- Install and secure handrails on stairs and on the bathtub.

OTHER SPRING CLEANING TASKS

- Change batteries on smoke alarms and carbon monoxide monitors.
- Clean out and organize the medicine cabinet; throw away all expired medications.
- Remove expired food items from the pantry and refrigerator.
- Put large print emergency numbers near the phone (911, doctor, personal contacts, poison control, etc.)

UNDERSTANDING SUPPORTIVE MEDICINE & PALLIATIVE CARE

Is there a difference between supportive medicine and palliative care? Not really according to many healthcare professionals. The terms often mean the same thing. Supportive medicine and palliative care are often thought of as 'end of life' treatments such as hospice care. In reality, they provide expert specialized medical care at any age and at any stage of a serious or life-limiting illness. The goal is to improve the quality of life for both patients and their families.

Supportive medicine and palliative care actually provide more – not less -- medical care and treats the whole person, not just the illness itself. The focus

of care is on relieving pain and stress, treating symptoms, giving maximum comfort and exploring all reasonable treatment options with the patient and family members. It may include treatments to prolong life as well as stopping curative treatments and entering the patient in hospice care (usually the last six months of life). Supportive care early in the disease management program ensures the patient has the best life possible while living with their chronic illness.

The supportive medicine and palliative care team includes doctors, nurses, social workers and other healthcare providers who work with the patient's primary care

doctor and specialists.

Treatment programs include:

- Alzheimer's disease
- Cancer
- Cardiac disease
- Congestive heart failure
- Chronic kidney disease
- ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease)
- Dementia
- Parkinson's disease
- and others

For supportive care ask your doctor for information about the Supportive Medicine and Palliative Care program at Kelsey-Seybold Clinic.

STATIN MEDICATION – LOWERING RISK OF HEART DISEASE

Should you be taking a statin? If you are at risk for heart disease, the answer is probably yes. There are four main groups of people who may be helped by statin drugs.

If you have:

- Diabetes
- Heart (Cardiovascular) disease
- High LDL (bad) cholesterol
- Higher 10-year risk of heart attack

The number of people in the United States with heart disease and stroke is increasing! Many people who are at high risk for heart attack or stroke don't know it. The good news is that many of the major risks for these conditions can be prevented and controlled through healthy lifestyle changes and medical treatment.

Managing your cholesterol is one of the prevention treatments. Your physician can recommend the correct statin medications to prevent heart disease.

Statins are designed to help people at risk for heart disease and are the only known drugs to actually lower the risk for heart attack and stroke for people with high cholesterol. Statins work by blocking out the source that your body needs to make cholesterol. The drug may also help your body rid itself of cholesterol that has built up as plaque on your artery walls. This helps stop heart attacks by preventing further blockage in your blood vessels. Statins include drugs such as simvastatin, atorvastatin, pravastatin, and rosuvastatin.

DIABETES

People with diabetes are at a higher risk for heart disease including heart attack, blocked blood vessels and stroke. These illnesses strike people with diabetes nearly twice as often as people without diabetes. You can read more on the American Diabetes Association website at www.diabetes.org.

Doctors often recommend people 40 – 75 years of age take a statin medication. The drug dose can be either moderate or high-intensity statins depending on your risk of heart disease or if you already have been diagnosed with heart disease. People with diabetes but do not have any other cardiovascular disease risk factors take a moderate-intensity statin, while those of all ages who have cardiovascular disease or additional risk factors, take a high-intensity statin.

CARDIAC DISEASE RISK

It is estimated that one in four deaths in the United States every year are due to heart disease. As plaque builds up in the arteries, the inside of the arteries become smaller which lessens or blocks the flow of blood. One in three adults have high “bad” LDL cholesterol, but only a third of those have the problem under control. Often diet, exercise and stopping smoking is not enough to lower your risk of heart disease.

Cardiac Disease is called clinical atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) and includes heart disease, history of heart attack, angina, blocked arteries (including

legs and neck), and stroke. The American Heart Association recommends people with known cardiovascular disease or a high risk of the disease take statin medications to help decrease their risk of heart attack or stroke.

Heart risk assessment tools to determine your 10-year risk of having a heart attack are available at Kelsey-Seybold Clinics during an office visit or online at various websites such as American Heart Association or Million Hearts site.

<http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/> or <https://millionhearts.hhs.gov/index.html>

Talk to your physician about your risk for heart disease and treatment options. If you are already taking a statin drug remember to take it as prescribed. If you have side effects from the medication, talk with your ordering physician. Often a different drug or lower dose may help.



ESTROGENS A POTENTIALLY HIGH RISK MEDICATION

Estrogen and estrogen combination products have been associated with increased risk of heart attack, stroke, breast cancer and blood clots – WHI Studies

The American Geriatrics Society has updated the Beers Criteria for Potentially Inappropriate Medication Use in Older Adults to avoid use of oral and transdermal estrogen formulations. The recommendation was based on the findings of the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) studies of increased risk of breast cancer and lack of heart protective and mental protection in older women.

WHAT ARE ESTROGENS MOST COMMONLY USED FOR?

- Reduce hot flashes in menopause
- Treat vaginal dryness, itching and burning due to menopause

WHAT CAN I TAKE INSTEAD OF ORAL AND TRANSDERMAL ESTROGENS?

The American Geriatrics Society states that vaginal tablets or creams are safe and effective.

WHAT ARE SOME ALTERNATIVE MEDICATIONS CURRENTLY ON FORMULARY?

Vaginal dryness

- Vagifem (vaginal tablet)
- Premarin vaginal cream
- Estrace vaginal cream
- Femring vaginal ring
- Estring vaginal ring

Hot flashes

- Venlafaxine
- Gabapentin

WHAT SHOULD I DO NEXT?

Talk to your doctor about which drug therapy is best for your menopausal symptoms



WOMAN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE FINDINGS

Estrogen progestin therapy has shown

- 24% increased risk of breast cancer overall
- Greater risk of developing dementia
- 80% risk of developing heart disease within the first year
- 33% increased risk of developing stroke

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Postmenopausal women shouldn't take estrogen and progestin to protect the heart
- If estrogen and estrogen with progestin are needed, they should be used at the lowest dose for the shortest duration.

COMPOUND MEDICATIONS

Did you know that not all of your prescriptions come ready in a bottle or tube? Some patients may need two or more ingredients mixed together to form a prescription with a strength and dosage that fits his or her specific needs. Known as compound medications, these special prescriptions may eliminate ingredients – such as dyes – for patients with allergies. If you have trouble swallowing pills, the medicine may be changed to a liquid form.

Under the Medicare Prescription Plan (Part D) compound medications are reviewed to make sure the active ingredients used are Part D eligible. Only the eligible ingredients that meet the definition of a Part D drug are covered. The remaining ingredients, such as bulk powders, are subject to retail pricing. Depending on the ingredients, your compound

medication may be available as a brand or generic drug.

If you are prescribed a compound medication, ask your doctor if there is a low-cost over the counter choice that you can take instead. The cost of Part D covered active ingredients counts against your Total Drug Spend. Often, those medicines can be very expensive and send you into the Coverage Gap or so-called “Donut Hole,” which often cause you to pay more for your prescriptions.

As a patient, you should also be aware of fraud and over charging involving compounded products. A major concern for the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) and the U.S. Food and

Drug Administration (FDA), these agencies understand that a large increase in the number of patients being prescribed compounded drugs may be a sign of fraud. Some of the higher priced products, including topical pain creams, are billed at hundreds or thousands of dollars per tube, while over the counter costs are just a couple of dollars. These prescriptions may not have been medically necessary—or even given to the patient at all! You can help prevent fraud and unnecessary costs. If you have questions regarding your compound prescription, check your plan benefit materials or call OptumRx Customer Service toll-free at 1-866-589-5222 (TTY/TDD users should call 1-888-206-8041).



DON'T KEEP KELSEY-CARE ADVANTAGE A SECRET! *Open Enrollment is Underway!*

Do you know someone who isn't happy with their Medicare plan? Do they know that for 2017 KelseyCare Advantage was awarded 5-out-of-5 Stars in overall rating from CMS and can switch to a KelseyCare Advantage plan and benefit from Kelsey-Seybold Clinic's renowned quality care? They most certainly can! And, best of all, they do not have to wait until the open enrollment period to make the switch. Special enrollment is going on right now!

Plans with a 5-Star rating, like KelseyCare Advantage, can enroll

new members throughout the year until November 30. Once they have enrolled, their KelseyCare Advantage coverage takes effect on the first day of the following month. So, for example, a member that enrolls on May 18, coverage becomes active on June 1.

We are so proud to have been designated a 5-Star plan for 2017. It means that KelseyCare Advantage meets a higher standard of care for all our member patients. It means that the Kelsey-Seybold medical team is committed to delivering superior patient care every day.

If you know someone that might be looking for a better health plan than the one they are currently on, invite them learn more about KelseyCare Advantage by calling (713) 442-JOIN (5646) today! Open enrollment continues until November 30.



Important Plan Information